

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: REF, BG

SUBJ: REFUGEE INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

REF: STATE 47282

1. WE ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMED ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF MUSLIM REFUGEES WHO FLED TO EAST BENGAL SINCE 1963. CONSENSUS IS THAT NO SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS DID; IN BOTH 1965 AND 1971 INFO-PAKISTAN WARS, REFUGEE FLOW WAS LARGELY THE REVERSE, WITH HINDUS ENTERING INDIA.

2. AS BEST ESTIMATE OF TOTAL NON-BENGALEE MUSLIM POPULATION OF BANGLADESH, WE ACCEPT ICRC PROJECTIONS, BASED ON TWO SEPARATE SURVEYS. AS OF AUGUST 1973, ICRC ESTIMATES THAT THERE WERE 450,000 NON-BENGALEE MUSLIMS, PLUS OR MINUS FIVE PERCENT, INCLUDING THOSE CLASSIFIABLE AS WEST PAKISTANI, A RELATIVELY SMALL PROPORTION. THIS FIGURE COMPARES FAVORABLY WITH POPULATION PROJECTION OF 1961 PAKISTAN CENSUS DATA ON SPEAKERS OF URDU AS A MOTHER TONGUE. TO DATE, 61,000 HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED TO PAKISTAN, ROUGHLY THREE-QUARTERS OF THEM OF INDIAN ORIGIN. ICRC EXPECTS THAT ANOTHER 30,000 WILL BE REPATRIATED BEFORE THE CURRENT OPERATION CONCLUDES. THUS, REMAINING POPULATION WILL BE ABOUT 360,000. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THESE CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS REFUGEES; PROBABLY NO MORE THAN 5 PERCENT ARE ASSIMILATED, WITH MINIMAL JOB AND HOUSING SITUATIONS. FACT THAT OVER 500,000 NAMES HAVE BEEN REGISTERED WITH ICRC FOR REPATRIATION BEARS THIS OUT.

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ALLOWING FOR CONSIDERABLE DUPLICATION IN REGISTRATION, ICRC

BELIEVES MOST OF THE NON-BENGALEE MUSLIMS HAVE CHOSEN REPATRIATION
BECAUSE OF PRECARIOUSNESS OF THEIR SITUATION IN BANGLADESH.
WHATEVER HAD BEEN THE DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION PRIOR TO 1971, VERY
FEW CAN BE CONSIDERED AS LEADING NORMAL LIVES TODAY.
NEWBERRY

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